

Helping People Quit

May 2005

Tobacco Facts

Tobacco-related diseases kill about 8,000 Washington residents every year.

Number of Washington smokers:
Youth – 73,000
Adults – 867,000

Seventy percent of tobacco users say they would like to quit.

On average, it can take eight attempts to quit successfully.

Most tobacco users want to quit the habit

About 46 million Americans smoke regularly, and 70 percent of those men, women, and children want to quit. Quitting is not easy, but studies show that tobacco users are two times more likely to quit successfully if they receive help, especially skills training, counseling, and medication, such as nicotine patches and gum.

Tobacco cessation programs prevent more deaths for less cost than other commonly provided clinical therapies such as mammography, colon cancer screening, and treatment of both high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Washington Tobacco Quit Line

Washington introduced the toll-free telephone Tobacco Quit Line in November 2000, and through March 2005 it had provided services to more than 58,000 callers. Quit line callers receive:

- Individualized counseling from specialists skilled in working with all forms of tobacco addiction.
- Development of a customized quit plan over the phone, including skill-building and problem-solving advice.
- Relapse prevention techniques.
- Pharmacological support information.
- Referrals to available community cessation support resources.
- A mailed Tobacco Quit Kit including materials tailored to the caller's needs, readiness to quit, and education level.
- Specialized services for pregnant women and those who chew tobacco.

Some quit line callers who don't have health insurance or are covered by Medicaid are offered intensive follow-up services, including telephone support calls from quit line specialists, and in some cases, nicotine patches or gum.

Healthcare provider training

Research has shown that more patients will quit tobacco when advised to do so by their doctors, so the Tobacco Program trains local health departments and others to supply doctors, dentists, and other healthcare providers with quit line information. The Tobacco Program also trains healthcare providers on how to talk to their patients about quitting and helps them develop systems to track a patient's progress in quitting. Research has shown that 5- to 15-minutes of counseling by a healthcare provider can change smoking behavior, and more intensive interventions can have an even greater impact.

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Toll-free Numbers

1-877-270-STOP

Spanish:
1-877-2NO-FUME

Hearing impaired (TTY):
1-877-777-6534

Find out more about the
Tobacco Quit Line at:
quitline.com

Visit the youth Web site at:
UnfilteredTV.com

Find out more about
secondhand smoke:
SecondhandSmokesYou.com

For more information on
tobacco prevention:
www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco

Counseling for low-income pregnant women

The Tobacco Program trains Department of Social and Health Services case managers to counsel their patients – low-income pregnant women – about quitting tobacco and reducing the amount of secondhand smoke in their homes.

Training for chemical dependency professionals

The Tobacco Program partners with the Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse to train chemical dependency professionals on treating tobacco as a primary addiction. The program also is collaborating to make treatment centers smoke-free.

Community and school programs

Nationwide, there are several programs underway that promise to help young people quit using tobacco. Through activities in both communities and schools, the "No On Tobacco" (NOT) and "Ending Nicotine Dependence" (END) programs are being implemented throughout the state.

The Department of Health provides funding to county health departments and others to build capacity in their communities to respond to tobacco users who want to quit.

A comprehensive approach to fighting tobacco use

Research shows that state anti-tobacco programs must be broad-based and comprehensive to be effective. In addition to helping people quit, Washington's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program supports programs in communities and schools, conducts public awareness and media campaigns, restricts the ability of kids to get tobacco, encourages smoke-free environments, and evaluates the effectiveness of state and local activities.